



# The Merritt Connection

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Dr. Marie-Elaine Burns, President

## New Art Club Brings Mission and Awareness of Programs to the College and Community

All it took was enrolling in one Botanical Art class at Merritt a few years ago, and Veronique Fleming was hooked. “It was such a wonderful and life-changing experience,” she says, “that I wanted to keep going.”



Since then she has taken many more classes and has been so inspired by the program and wanting to share the experience with others, that this semester she revived the Merritt Art Students Association (MASA) and was voted its president. After just four months, she has recruited more than 40 members who have collectively brought the Art Department into the limelight with its exhibits, fundraising, professional development, and creation of a scholarship.

“Our mission is to support and nurture the artist community at Merritt,” says Veronique. “We assist students in creating a forum to exhibit and promote art-making of all forms on campus and beyond and to

provide professional development information to help them succeed in their art careers. We are also hoping that Merritt will soon offer an Associate Degree in Art like the other three Peralta colleges.”

Under Veronique’s leadership, the group has been busy fulfilling their mission all semester, beginning with their first goal of reorganizing and freshly painting the art studio, and ending with coordinating the Merritt “Show of Art,” selling their art and coordinating a kids’ art table at Landscape Horticulture’s Spring Plant Sale, and bringing renowned artist John Muir Laws to campus for a professional development workshop that drew a crowd of more than 50.

The club’s faculty advisor, Sheila Metcalf-Tobin, is thrilled with the transformation of the department thanks to the efforts of the new club. “The reinvention of the Merritt Art Student Association has been fabulous to witness,” she says. “With the inspiration, enthusiasm, and creative leadership of Veronique Fleming, these students have come together, organized, and worked to support, improve and promote the Merritt Art Department.” (For information or to contribute to the scholarship, contact Veronique at [yoginifly@gmail.com](mailto:yoginifly@gmail.com).)



*(Pictured left, above, at the “Show of Merritt” are MASA members: Karen, Holly, Pete, Veronique, Joey, Faculty Advisor Sheila Metcalf-Tobin, and (front) Tadhq and Milou. Pictured right: Veronique joining the effort to paint the art studio.*